



# CITY OF LODI

## COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

AGENDA TITLE: Unmet Transit Needs for 1996/97

MEETING DATE: June 5, 1996

PREPARED BY: Public Works Director

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** That the City Council acknowledge receipt of the *Analysis and Determination of Unmet Transit Needs for Fiscal Year 1996/97* which finds there are no unmet transit needs in the City of Lodi.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** The San Joaquin County Council of Governments (COG), in conjunction with the various cities in the County, conducts hearings annually to determine if there are unmet transit needs. The findings for 1996/97 have been delivered. That report finds there are no unmet transit needs in the City of Lodi.

The report summarized issues and concerns raised through public testimony received at the hearings. Many of the comments related to lack of fixed-route service in the northeast and southeast corners of Lodi, and some operational issues. The report states:

"Though sensitive to the concerns of Lodi's citizens who may desire expanded service, for the following reason, COG staff is not prepared to identify an unmet need:

General public Dial-A-Ride service is still available.

Access to the new service is not uniform across the City. Though the routing of the buses was based on a public planning process, that gaps should appear after the service commences should be no surprise. Through informal conversation, Lodi's staff acknowledges holes in the service and will try to adapt and fine tune the current system to bring its routes closer to those who desire better fixed-route access. Lodi's consultant has already been informed of the recent needs of the public.


New services, such as the GrapeLine, need time to gain public recognition, achieve mandated farebox recovery ratios, and adjust to meet the calls for service demanded of it.

COG staff will continue to monitor Lodi's progress toward expanding its fixed-route service. The City of Lodi staff is aware that operational issues, such as routing and drivers' behavior, need to be addressed.

Lodi's GrapeLine is headed in the right direction and the City's staff has the situation under control. COG staff would like to express our appreciation of a job well done, and wishes Lodi many years of success with the GrapeLine."

Little was said regarding the Dial-a-Ride service; however, in a discussion on the service provided, the report referred to our publicly-acclaimed Dial-a-Ride system. Council should be aware that we are providing over 80,000 Dial-a-Ride trips per year and over 130,000 fixed-route rides per year. The City Council is to be congratulated on the City of Lodi's transit system.

**FUNDING:** Not applicable.

  
Jack L. Ronsko  
Public Works Director

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JLR/JLG/lm  
Attachment

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

H. Dixon Flynn -- City Manager

## ANALYSIS AND DETERMINATION OF UNMET TRANSIT NEEDS FOR FISCAL YEAR 1996-97

### **Current Input**

The City of Lathrop held two public hearings to solicit input on transit needs. These were held on November 17, 1995 at 1:00 p.m. and on November 21, 1995 at 6:00 p.m. during the evening in front of the City Council. No needs were expressed by the public at these meetings. San Joaquin County used this as an opportunity to coordinate two of its meetings with the City of Lathrop.

### **Discussion**

There was no public testimony concerning unmet transit needs for the City of Lathrop. Members of the Lathrop City Council expressed comments on the current service which included:

- ✓ Re-routing the bus service to stop by the Boy's and Girl's Club.
- ✓ Include Sierra High School in transit schedule

COG is encouraged by the City's ongoing active involvement and interest in reviewing and upgrading local transit services.

### **Conclusion**

**There are no unmet local transit needs in the City of Lathrop, at this time.** COG Staff would like suggest the Lathrop City staff follow up on the comments received with the County. The comments received were operational in nature, and should be discussed with the County to determine any future action.

### **Lodi**

#### **Current Service Description**

The City of Lodi offers general public Dial-A-Ride transit service and on November 25, 1994, launched fixed route service, dubbed "The GrapeLine."

## ANALYSIS AND DETERMINATION OF UNMET TRANSIT NEEDS FOR FISCAL YEAR 1996-97

1. Dial-a-Ride service area includes the City of Lodi and the unincorporated areas of Woodbridge, the Arbor Mobile Home Park in Acampo, and the Freeway Mobile Home Park south of the Lodi City limits. Service to areas outside of the city limits is carried out by contractual agreement between the County of San Joaquin and the City of Lodi. Lodi City provides service to these areas, but the transit subsidy comes from San Joaquin County.

Lodi's Dial-A-Ride fleet includes 4 full-size wagons and 2 sedans. The fleet also has 2 ramp-equipped vans, and 2 new, lift-equipped buses. The buses can seat nine with a wheelchair in place. Service is available weekdays from 6:30 a.m. - 7:00 p.m., on Saturday from 7:30 a.m. - 6:30 p.m., and on Sundays from 12:00 noon - 5:00 p.m.

The general public Dial-A-Ride fare was raised when GrapeLine service began, from \$1 per trip to \$2. Senior and disabled passengers now pay \$1.00, not 50¢. Fares for service to areas outside of the City limits, but within the general service area (Woodbridge, Acampo, Freeway Mobile Home Park) are \$1.00 higher.

2. GrapeLine fixed route service began the day after Thanksgiving, November 25, 1994. To promote ridership, coupons for free rides were distributed in attractive flyers describing the new service. The GrapeLine includes:



New mini-buses



Four fixed routes that converge at the Post Office in downtown Lodi



30-minute frequencies



Affordable fares (50¢ each way, seniors 25¢)

GrapeLine hours of operation are from Monday to Friday, 6:00 a.m. - 6:30 p.m., and Saturday from 7:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Prior to the GrapeLine service, Lodi already had general public dial-a-ride serving the City and some of its surroundings. In fact, a chief reason for the GrapeLine's launch was to take pressure off of its publicly-acclaimed dial-a-ride system. City management has repeatedly stated that the GrapeLine is meant to supplement, not take the place of, the dial-a-ride system. A reason Lodi was able to make a commitment to fixed route service is the very fact that the city is growing. The 1990 census showed that Lodi's population passed 50,000, making the

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city eligible for Federal Transit Administration Section 9 formula grant funds. These funds are a major contributor to the new system's capital and operating expenses.

With Lodi's new Grapeline service and the fare increase from \$1.00 to \$2.00 on the DAR. The Grapeline has exceeded many of the expectations set prior to its start-up (mentioned below).

In addition to Lodi's GrapeLine and dial-a-ride services, elderly and disabled individuals who need intercity transit service to points outside of Lodi but within San Joaquin County are eligible for San Joaquin County's CAT Dial-A-Ride Service. Eligible riders must make trip reservations between 1 - 14 days in advance (at least 24 hours). Lodi's CAT boardings in FY 94-95 were 3,432.

Since SMART's October 3, 1994 launching of intercity and interregional transit services, Lodi patrons have taken advantage of two new intercity routes. Route 20 connects Lodi with Stockton, Lathrop, and Tracy. The 21 connects with Stockton and Manteca. Both the intercity lines are route-deviation services. In addition, Bay Area and Sacramento area employees can ride new commute service coaches to major employers. For a further description of the intercity and interregional transit services, please see "Chapter 6 - Intercity and Interregional Transit."

### **Demographic Information**

The 1990 census data reveals that the City of Lodi has a relatively high concentration of senior citizens, 15.7% of the population compared to countywide average of 11%, but is otherwise rather average in its demographics, as they relate to COG's definition of transit disadvantaged. Low-income persons constitute 12% of the Lodi City population. This is below the countywide average of 15%, but still represents a significant number of people: 6,284. Six percent of Lodi's seniors are low-income and 13% of the non-institutionalized seniors have a reported mobility limitation. Countywide the percent of seniors who are low-income is 7.7% and the percent who have mobility limitations is 15%.

The number of vehicles available is also an indicator of transit need. Nearly 10% of the Lodi City households had no vehicles available in 1990. This is higher than the average for incorporated areas.

### **Current Input**

After it's first year of service, the GrapeLine service has averaged close to 12,000 passengers a month. Because of the higher than expected passenger counts, GrapeLine has already

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commenced discussions with their consultant for the possibility of adding service in the northeast section of Lodi. Included in the discussions of service expansion is the possibility of integrating a loop routing system through certain areas of Lodi.

The City of Lodi held two public hearings to receive public input on unmet transit needs. Both hearings were held on December 20, 1995, the first at 10 a.m., the second before the City Council at 7:00 p.m.

Transit issues and concerns raised through public testimony at these meetings are summarized below:

- ✓ The need for GrapeLine service to serve the northeast side of Lodi
- ✓ The need for more GrapeLine service in the Turner Road area and other specific sites
- ✓ Reinforce policy of having drivers announce stops
- ✓ Provide bus schedules on diskette or braille for sight impaired citizens.
- ✓ Coordinate local service with SMART's Intercity service to reduce time spent at transfer center.
- ✓ The need for a wheelchair only bus for the increasing number of wheelchair passengers using Dial-A-Ride.
- ✓ Create a total reservation system (as opposed to demand/response) for Dial-A-Ride, this will hopefully reduce waiting times for disabled/wheelchair passengers.
- ✓ Moving stop on route #3 at Ham and Lodi Ave. South in front of medical center.
- ✓ Evaluate drivers work habits
- ✓ Loop system needed for passengers who have difficulty crossing busy street to get to and from bus stops.
- ✓ Use of colors with stronger contrast on bus schedule to aid the visually impaired.

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- ✓ Post route numbers on doors of vehicle to aid the visually impaired in differentiating between buses.
- ✓ Placement of bus benches and shelters at major pickup locations.
- ✓ General support and praise for the GrapeLine fixed route service

### **Discussion**

The City of Lodi now has two-tiered transit service. With the assistance of Federal Transit Administration Section 9 formula grants and TDA funds, the City has launched GrapeLine fixed route service. GrapeLine has now been in service for a little more than a year, and as with any new transit system, the GrapeLine is experiencing growing pains. The majority of the citizens at the hearing expressed their appreciation of the new service.

Of the above comments, Lodi city staff have addressed a majority of them as being in plans for the near future. Though sensitive to the concerns of Lodi citizens who may desire expanded service, for the following reasons, COG staff is not prepared to identify an unmet need.

- ✓ General Public Dial-a-Ride service is still available. One reason for launching the fixed route service was to lighten the burden being placed on the Dial-a-Ride system. However, that service is still in operation and still serves the general public, though dial-a-ride's fares have been raised.
- ✓ Access to the new service is not uniform across the City. Though the routing of the buses was based on a public planning process, that gaps should appear after the service commences should be no surprise. Through informal conversation, Lodi's staff acknowledges holes in the service and will try to adapt and fine-tune the current system to bring its routes closer to those who desire better fixed route access. Lodi's consultant has already been informed of the recent needs of the public.

Bus shelters and benches have already been purchased and are to be delivered soon in the future.

- ✓ New Services such as the GrapeLine need time to gain public recognition, achieve mandated farebox recovery ratios, and adjust to meet the calls for service demanded of it.

## ANALYSIS AND DETERMINATION OF UNMET TRANSIT NEEDS FOR FISCAL YEAR 1996-97

COG staff will continue to monitor Lodi's progress toward expanding its fixed route service. The City of Lodi's staff is aware that operational issues, such as routing and drivers behavior, need to be addressed.

Lodi's GrapeLine is headed in the right direction and the City's staff have the situation under control. COG staff would like express our appreciation of a job well done, and wishes Lodi many years of success with the GrapeLine.

### **Conclusion**

There are no unmet transit needs in Lodi at this time. COG Staff would like to suggest Lodi Staff evaluate the operations of GrapeLine on a constant basis. After GrapeLine's completion of one year of service, an update to the Short Range Transportation Plan will ensure the system has goals to reach in the near future.

### **Manteca**

#### **Current Service Description**

Transit services in Manteca include the city-sponsored, demand-response subsidized taxi service, available only to the elderly and disabled, and the County's general public route deviation service. The city-sponsored subsidized taxi service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The route deviation service is primarily geared to benefit Lathrop passengers but does travel through Manteca. (Further information about the route deviation service can be found in the discussion about Lathrop's transit services.) Wheelchair lift-equipped service is also available, as needed, through a contractual arrangement between Manteca and San Joaquin County.

TABLE 10 reveals that ridership and service miles in the subsidized taxi service increased from fiscal year 1993-94 to 1994-95. Ridership increased from 56,599, to 63,286 passengers per year with 375,614 service miles recorded.

The general public route deviation service that traverses Manteca also carries Manteca passengers. The majority of passenger boardings occur in Manteca. This is indicative of the fact that Manteca boardings are made not only by Mantecans, but also by Lathrop and French Camp residents returning home. The transit service operator estimated that about 56% of the FY 1994-95 (3,645) riders boarded in Manteca. The ridership count represents a 15% increase from the FY 93-94 count.